Memorandum

TO: **Reema Griffith, Executive Director**
Richard Ford, Chair

FROM: **Paul Parker, Sr. Policy Analyst**

RE: **Governors' Climate Change Initiative**

DATE: **March 12, 2007**

On February 26, 2007, the Governors of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington announced the formation of the Western Regional Climate Action Initiative to implement a joint strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Within the next six months, the states will work together to develop a regional target for reducing greenhouse gases and over the next 18 months, a market-based program to reach that target, such as a cap and trade system, will be devised. (See attached News Release).

This regional effort builds on the 2003 West Coast Global Warming Initiative, signed by the governors of California, Oregon and Washington, and Governor Gregoire's Executive Order No. 07-02, creating the Washington Climate Change Challenge (attached).

This memo is intended to begin a discussion at the Transportation Commission regarding its role in responding to climate change. It will outline what Governor Gregoire has proposed and describe how efforts to reach the 2020 and 2035 goals for reduced greenhouse gas emissions may involve changes in transportation planning and management. I also will suggest possible next steps for the Commission to consider.

Executive Order No. 07-02

The Executive Order establishes greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and recognizes that Washington has already taken major steps toward reduction of greenhouse gases.[1] It estimates that full implementation of those policy actions will move Washington 60% of the way toward the 2020 greenhouse gas goal.

[1] Measures adopted by the Legislature in 2005 and 2006 include:

The greenhouse gas emissions reduction and clean energy economy goals established for Washington State in Executive Order 07-02 are:

> • By 2020, reduce in the state of Washington to 1990 levels, a reduction of 10 million metric tons below 2004 emissions;
>
> • By 2035, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state of Washington to 25% below 1990 levels, a reduction of 30 million metric tons below 2004;
>
> • By 2050, the state of Washington will do its part to reach global climate stabilization levels by reducing emissions to 50% below 1990 levels or 70% below our expected emissions that year, an absolute reduction in emissions of nearly 50 million metric tons below 2004.

Executive Order 07-02 also directs the Department of Community Development, Trade and Economic Development and the Department of Ecology to consult with a broad range of stakeholders, including executive branch agencies, to develop the Washington Climate Change Challenge, in order to achieve at least the remaining 40% of the 2020 goal.

Changes in Transportation Planning and Management

The State of Washington – and other states on the east and west coasts – are not the only governments responding to the realities of climate change. In Washington alone, King County, Seattle and several other cities have adopted resolutions and other actions to change policies and practices to reduce greenhouse gases.

The King County Executive's Office has developed a 138-page Climate Plan, including goals and actions to take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.[2] The City of Seattle has created a 40-page Seattle Plan[3] that responds to each

---

- Adopting the 2005 Clean Car Act requiring certain automobiles to meet tougher emissions standards beginning with 2009 models;
- Retrofitting 50% of school buses and 20% of local government diesel engine vehicles to reduce highly toxic diesel emissions;
- Leading the nation in requiring fuel suppliers to ensure that 2% of the fuel they sell is biodiesel or ethanol;
- Leading the nation in adopting high performance green building standards and having one of the most energy efficient building codes in the nation;
- Implementing the best energy efficiency standards for appliances;
- Passing a clean energy initiative to increase the amount of energy efficiency and renewable resources in our state's electricity system;
- Purchasing hybrid and low emission vehicles for state agency use.

[2] http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/news/2007/pdf/ClimatePlan.pdf
[3] http://www.seattle.gov/climate/

recommendation of the Mayor's Green Ribbon Commission on Climate Protection, focusing on Seattle's main climate pollutants, emphasizing solutions that reduce driving, increase fuel efficiency and use of biofuels, and reduce energy use in homes and businesses. In addition, more than 300 mayors across the United States have signed Mayor Nickels' US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to beat the Kyoto Protocol target for reducing climate pollution.

Both of these plans indicate that a significant amount of greenhouse gas reduction must come from the transportation sector to achieve reduced emissions. With its reliance on hydropower for electricity generation, it is estimated that transportation accounts for at least 50% of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington.

Doug Howell, Special Projects Manager for the King County Climate Initiative, has engaged in early dialogue with national, state and regional transportation advocacy groups on the nexus between climate and the re-authorization of the federal transportation law, i.e. the Green Tea conference call. In reviewing the Governor's emission reduction goals, he succinctly summarizes the options available as *Clean Car* and *Less Car*. Despite the action already taken by the 2005 Legislature to adopt California emission standards (a *Clean Car* strategy), Howell has calculated that anticipated increases in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will wipe out most of the emission reductions.

Howell asserts that the Governor's goals can be reached only by adopting both *Clean Car* and *Less Car* strategies. Consistent with this approach, King County Executive Ron Sims last July asked that the Puget Sound Regional Council expand its discussion of climate change in the Vision 2020 Update and establish VMT reduction as the primary metric for climate change, air quality, and efficient transportation.[4]

Clean Car Strategies	*Less Car Strategies*
Achieve Greater Fuel Efficiency Use Different Fuels • Electric • Ethanol • Hydrogen	Mode shift to • Transit • Bike or Walk Change Land Use Patterns Change Business Models

Although the King County Climate Plan acknowledges that global warming may impact infrastructure[5] and mobility, it does not suggest any changes in infrastructure planning at this time. Nor has the WSDOT changed any of its

---

[4] Letter to Norman Abbott, Puget Sound Regional Council from King County Executive Ron Sims, July 31, 2006, page 4.

[5] "Changes in precipitation patterns and sea level rise may cause greater damage to roadways, bridges and seawalls from erosion, landslides, and flooding." *King County 2007 Climate Plan*, page 36.

assumptions and design standards for bridges, culverts, and stormwater facilities.[6]

Next Steps:

The Commission should consider engaging in the effort led by Ecology and DCTED to develop policies and strategies to implement the Washington Climate Change Challenge. This could take the form of monitoring or joining the discussions.

The Commission should consider suggesting a study be done to evaluate whether future investments in transportation by the state and local governments take into account anticipated climatic impacts of global warning changing conditions such as increased frequency and intensity of storms, sea level rise, and reduced snowpack. In addition, there is a need to study the fiscal impacts of climate change on transportation: the ability to achieve *Clean Car* and *Less Car* goals will require a different mix of future revenue needs and – given the current fuel tax based revenue system -- will require different revenue streams to meet those needs as less fossil fuels are used.

[6] John Ryan, *How much should climate change affect infrastructure design?* Daily Journal of Commerce, December 21, 2006.